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THE CONDOR

An Illustrated Magazine
of Western Ornithology

Published Bi-Monthly by the Cooper Ornithological Club of California.

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

Don't neglect to vote on that simplified spelling proposition (see THE CONDOR, September, 1910, page 176.) The returns to date show very close results, so that a few more votes one way or the other will decide the matter. If you don't want to see simplified spelling in our magazine, say so. While the Editor himself, favors the use of it, he will not bear a personal grudge against anyone for differing from him. He fears that some are withholding an expression of opinion in the belief that the Editor will actively resent an adverse decision. He hopes that he deserves a higher rating than this. Remember that the vote must be concluded December 10; for the January issue has to be made up immediately following that date.

We urge the attention of CONDOR readers to the Business Manager's announcement on the inside back cover of this issue. Nothing is more certain than the absolute dependence of a successful enterprise like THE CONDOR upon the concentrated efforts of a very few persons in addition to the moral and practical support of a large number of others. Both are essential to the maintenance of our magazine on a high level of usefulness. Chambers and Law are men of affairs, with multitudinous private business interests; yet they are giving freely of the time necessary to secure the financial support of THE CONDOR. Let us all help them. Keep in mind the purposes of the Cooper Club:

For the observation and co-operative study of Birds, because of the resulting pleasure;
For the spread of interest in Bird Study, so that this pleasure may be shared by others;
For the publication of Ornithological Knowledge, as being a contribution to Science.

William Leon Dawson, author of *The Birds of Ohio* and (with Mr. Bowles) *The Birds of Washington*, and secretary of our sister organization, the Caurinus Club, is now in San Francisco. Mr. Dawson is planning to spend the next few weeks in this vicinity where he will be at home to all Cooper Club members at the Exeter Hotel, 154 Ellis Street. He will spend the holidays at Santa Barbara with his former associate, Mr. J. H. Bowles, and the remainder of the winter will be past in the neighborhood of Los Angeles.

Mr. W. W. Grant of New York City has devised a very convenient loose-leaf note-book for the use of beginning bird students. It is of pocket size and the leaves are of two sorts, ruled and headed with various captions. An outline drawing of a bird is shown, and a list of colors, numbered, is given, the intention being that the student can record in a few minutes the coloration of a bird by putting the color numbers on the drawing of the bird on his note page. Space is also indicated for various other features of the specimen observed, together with the conditions of observation.

The records obtained by this system require the least possible length of time in securing them, and at the same time secure the accuracy accompanying immediate inscription. Mr. Grant has arranged that the National Association of Audubon Societies will sell this book at cost, so that it will become available to amateur observers of birds everywhere. The idea is clearly of value and should result in much benefit to the cause.

Messrs. Witherby & Co., of London, announce an important work on Australian Birds which they are about to issue. A very large sum of money is being expended upon the preparation of this work, and every care is being exercised to produce results as perfect as possible in every direction and thoroly up to date.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

DISTRIBUTION AND MIGRATION OF NORTH AMERICAN SHOREBIRDS, by WELLS W. COOKE (=U. S. Dept. Agriculture, Biological Survey, Bulletin No. 35, pp. 1 to 100, 4 pls.; issued October 6, 1910).

Professor Cooke and his co-workers of the Biological Survey have here brought together practically all the main facts known in regard to the subject expressed in the title. The economic importance of a compendium of this kind becomes apparent when one takes into account that increasingly large numbers of these valuable game birds are being killed annually, that unless measures are taken to protect them, most of the larger species are likely to become extinct, and further that a knowledge of the summer and winter abodes of the several species and of the routes they take in migration is essential to effective legislation in their behalf.

The scientific value of the present paper cannot be over-emphasized. We have here collected an enormous aggregation of authenticated records, indicating with far greater precision than anything published before the breeding and winter habitats and the routes of migration of the 85 recognized species of Limicolae known to occur in North America. The author is able from this mass of data to present many generalizations of remarkable interest and wide significance.

The more important of these conclusions are that many waders pursue an annual course of migration in the path of an ellipse, returning north by an entirely different and remote route from that traversed on the southern journey; that some species lengthen their migratory travels so that they are carried 7000 or even 9000 miles from their breeding grounds, making their winter homes in extreme southern South America; that certain species make single flights without resting of at least 2000 miles.

Gunners are held responsible for a large part of the decrease in the numbers of our shorebirds; and yet other causes are operative, some of which it is probably not practicable to remove. The Eskimo Curlew altho formerly abundant in fall on the New England coast and in spring thru the Mississippi Valley is rapidly approaching extinction, if indeed any still exist. A simple explanation of this, offered by Professor Cooke, is that during recent years the former winter home of the Eskimo Curlew, in Argentina, has been settled and cultivated, while its spring feeding grounds in Nebraska and South Dakota have been converted into farm land. This same cause is doubtless the chief basis for the change in numbers of many of our birds.

Of local interest to Californians is the probably unique migration route taken by those Mountain Plover which winter in the Sacramento Valley and southward into the San Diegan district. "The farthest west and north that the species is known to breed is Montana; hence whether the California wintering birds come from Montana or from the more southern districts, they apparently form an exception to the general rule that North American birds do not winter farther west than they breed."

A bird new to California, here for the first time recorded, is the Upland Plover, a specimen of which was taken by Vernon Bailey at Tule Lake, August 8, 1896.—J. GRINNELL.

NOTES ON NEW ENGLAND BIRDS, By HENRY D. THOREAU; arranged and edited by FRANCIS H. ALLEN, with eleven illustrations from photographs of birds in nature and a map of Concord, Mass., showing localities mentioned by Thoreau in his JOURNAL. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1910, pp. ix + 452; price \$1.75 net.

"Scattered through the fourteen volumes of Thoreau's published JOURNAL are many interesting notes on the natural history of New England and a large proportion of these relate to birds. In the belief that readers and students would be glad to have these bird notes arranged systematically in a single volume, this book has been prepared. * * *

It was, indeed, as a describer rather than as an observer that Thoreau excelled. He never acquired much skill in the diagnosis of birds seen in the field. He never became in any respect an expert ornithologist, and some of the reasons are not far to seek. He was too intent on becoming an expert analogist, for one thing. It better suited his genius to trace some analogy between the soaring hawk and his own thoughts than to make a scientific study of the bird. Moreover his field, including as it did all nature, was too wide to admit of specialization in a single branch."

These words from the editor's preface explain fully the nature and scope of this book.

These are not the complete records from the *Journal*, but only "those seeming to have some intrinsic value, whether literary or scientific—using both terms in a liberal sense."

The notes were made between the years 1845 and 1860, principally between 1853 and the latter date, and cover some 115 species, besides general and miscellaneous notes (species unidentified).

It is an interesting contribution to the literary side of ornithology and should have some value to the student also.—H. T. CLIFTON.

A | MONOGRAPH | OF THE | PETRELS | (Order Tubinares) | By | FREDERICK DU CANE GODMAN | D. C. L. F. R. S. | President of the British Ornithologists' Union | With hand-coloured Plates | by J. G. Keulemans | Witherby & Co. | 326 High Holborn London | 1907-1910. Large 4to (10x13 inches), pp. i-lvi, 1-381, col. pl. 1-103. Price complete, bound, fifteen guineas.

Part V of this work reached us the last of May (1910), and brings to a wholly satisfactory conclusion the undertaking so elaborately begun four years ago. (See reviews in this magazine for 1908, p. 96, 1909, p. 72.) Part V comprises the remainder of the Tubinares not previously treated, namely, the albatrosses. Also: the full title page for the whole work (given above); the Preface; Introduction; chapter "On the Systematic Position of the Petrels", by W. P. Pycraft; Systematic List of Species; List of Plates; Classification; Index.—J. G.

LIFE OF | WILLIAM MACGILLIVRAY | [etc., 3 lines] | By WILLIAM MACGILLIVRAY, W. S. | Author of "Rob Lindsay and His School," etc. | With a Scientific Appreciation | By J. Arthur Thompson | [etc., 1 line] | with illustrations | [quotation] | London | John Murray, Albemarle Street, W. | 1910; 8vo., pp. i-xvi, 1-222, 12 plates. Price 10 | 6.

Those who find interest in historical biography will undoubtedly obtain much pleasure by reading the life of MacGillivray, the full title of which is given above. It was MacGillivray, a Scotchman, that Audubon secured to help him write the technical portions of his Ornithological Biography. The name is familiar to even the youngest students of American birds thru its being borne by at least two of our birds, a warbler and a sparrow. The book in hand tells among other things of the felicitous cooperation maintained between two men for nine years, the time occupied in